

*Anyone who raises, transports, and/or fishes for largemouth bass in Wisconsin needs to be aware of the following information provided by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection-Division of Animal Health.*

**Recommendations to fish farmers concerning largemouth bass virus**

**Largemouth bass virus has now been found in Lake Geneva and the Mississippi River in Wisconsin. The Division of Animal Health recommends that you do not stock fish farms or lakes with largemouth bass that have contacted or originated from waters where the virus has been found. Besides Wisconsin, these waters are in the following states:**

- Alabama
- Arkansas
- Florida
- Georgia
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Michigan
- Missouri
- Mississippi
- Oklahoma
- North Carolina
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Texas

**What is largemouth bass virus?**

Largemouth bass virus (LMBV) infects adult largemouth bass, rock bass and white bass in the wild, and is sometimes fatal. Externally, the fish appear normal. Internally, the swimbladder is severely enlarged. There is no evidence so far of human health risk from eating infected fillets.

**Can largemouth bass virus be transferred to my ponds?**

There appears to be significant risk in stocking infected fish. Wisconsin aquaculture veterinarians and fish farmers have not reported largemouth bass virus on any fish farm in Wisconsin. The Division of Animal Health will continue to instruct veterinarians who assess on-farm fish health in proper procedures to detect the virus.

**What should I do if largemouth bass die suddenly in my pond?**

Contact a Wisconsin aquaculture veterinarian in your area. A list of veterinarians is available from the Division of Animal Health at [datcpfishfarms@wi.gov](mailto:datcpfishfarms@wi.gov) or by calling Amy Basel at 608-224-4887.

**What don't we know about largemouth bass virus?**

This is a new disease. We do not know yet exactly how largemouth bass virus is transmitted. We do not have sufficient information to say that it is not in other lakes or other states. We do not know what activities are contributing to its spread. Boats, fishing tackle and angling practices are believed by many experts to be important factors in the spread of LMBV.

**What should I do if I suspect or find largemouth bass virus?**

Veterinarians and fish farmers should immediately report any finding of this condition in any fish in Wisconsin to Dr. Myron Kebus at the Division of Animal Health, 608/224-4876.

**How do I reduce the risk of introducing largemouth bass virus?**

**When purchasing fish:**

- Buy only from fish farmers registered in Wisconsin.
- If the fish are imported, ask for a current health certificate and the state of origin.

**Advice for anglers**

- Clean fishing equipment, boats and trailers if you've been using them in one body of water and are going to a different one.
- Do not move fish from one body of water to another.

**These steps are especially important if you fish or boat in the states where LMBV has been found.**